



# Locally Sponsored Project Initiation Document (PID)

EVALUATION GUIDANCE *(FOR REIMBURSED WORK)*

DECEMBER 2023

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# 1 – Introduction

The Locally Sponsored Project Initiation Document (PID) Evaluation Guidance (Guidance) is a component of the Caltrans System Investment Strategy (CSIS) to promote project alignment with State goals and policies in early project initiation. This Guidance applies to projects proposed on the State Highway System (SHS), sponsored by local agencies, where a cooperative agreement must be executed between the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Project Sponsor (Partner), followed by an approved PID.

This Guidance outlines Caltrans process for reviewing locally sponsored project proposals and consulting on preliminary project scopes at the initial stage of planning phase. This process is intended to initiate early collaboration between Caltrans and partners and consider multimodal and climate action opportunities in PID development to promote project alignment with Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI) and California Transportation Plan 2050. Project proposals determined to be conceptually aligned with CAPTI will be streamlined in the review process. Project proposals that may not be clearly aligned with CAPTI require further discussion between Caltrans and Partner to determine the most suitable alignment approach.

This Guidance focuses on locally sponsored PIDs, where projects are primarily funded by local agencies or private entities on a reimbursed basis. An exception is locally sponsored projects within County population of less than 40,000, as identified in California Streets and Highways Code Section 2104 and Highway Users Tax Account. This exception, along with projects sponsored by Caltrans outside of the State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP), are guided by the State-sponsored Non-SHOPP PID Project Nomination Guidance available [here](#). This Guidance also does not apply to projects funded by SHOPP, which includes maintenance and rehabilitation type projects.

It is important to note that this Guidance does not prevent projects from initiating PID and moving into the project development process. Rather, the Guidance is to promote early collaboration and establish a collective alignment approach to advance State goals and policies and strengthen partnerships. The extent in which a project aligns with CAPTI also does not prevent Partners from pursuing any state and federal discretionary funding opportunities as the lead applicant.

This Guidance does not supersede other existing documents, including but not limited to, Vehicle Miles Traveled Decision Document, Transportation Planning Scoping Information Sheet, Complete Streets Decision Document, or PID Safety Guidance requirements, as well as other technical analysis and future CSIS

nominations or evaluation. Projects identified as mitigation in CEQA documents will also reviewed for CAPTI alignment and are not exempt from this process.

## 1.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Guidance is to provide a clear and transparent process for reviewing projects proposed and sponsored by local agencies for improvements on the SHS. Early collaboration between Caltrans and Partners is the objective of this Guidance to discuss and agree on the alignment approach with the state goals and priorities established in the following:

- [Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure \(CAPTI\)](#)
- [California Transportation Plan \(CTP\) 2050](#)

## 2 – Background

CAPTI Key Action S4.1 requires Caltrans to “develop and implement the CSIS to align Caltrans Project Nominations with the CAPTI Investment framework.” As a result, this locally sponsored PID evaluation process was conceived as a mechanism to seek project alignment with CAPTI and CTP 2050 as early as possible in the project development process. The process outlined in this Guidance helps facilitate early engagement and communication between Caltrans, local agencies, and other entities to identify opportunities to align proposed projects on the SHS with state goals and priorities.

For major capital projects<sup>1</sup> proposed on the SHS, a PID is required to be developed and approved by Caltrans before a project can be programmed and proceed to the next phase of project development, the Project Approval and Environmental Document (PA&ED) phase. The PID establishes the purpose and need of the project and outlines the scope, schedule, and cost of the project through the construction phase. All locally sponsored projects initiating PID development is required to undergo an alignment review, based on this guidance, to determine alignment with state goals and priorities and agree on an alignment approach prior to executing a cooperative agreement with Caltrans.

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<sup>1</sup> Construction Cost Thresholds Within State ROW of greater than \$3 million

## 3 – Locally Sponsored PID Alignment Review

Locally sponsored PIDs are developed for a variety of projects to address various multimodal transportation needs, such as safety and operational improvements, transportation management systems, access modifications, and highway facility additions and enhancements. The anticipated funding sources for future project development phases (including the construction phase) frequently comprise of local fund sources, formula funds, and state and federal discretionary grants. While years of collaborations may have occurred amongst Caltrans, Partners, and other entities in identifying and assessing needs on the SHS, the project alignment review begins when Partner is ready to propose a project on the SHS and enter into a cooperative agreement with Caltrans to initiate locally sponsored PIDs. The alignment review process is intended to be concurrent with development of the cooperative agreement, thus, would not hinder existing process.

### 3.1 – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A robust collaboration among Caltrans District and HQ staff and Partners is paramount in the success of the alignment review under this Guidance. While there may be other parties involved depending on the project, this Guidance focuses on the following key roles & responsibilities:

- **Partner:** The Local Agency, sponsoring the proposed project, initiates the project proposal and request to enter into a cooperative agreement with Caltrans.
- **Caltrans District:** The [District Investment Planning Manager \(IPM\)](#), or designee, is the District point of contact throughout the alignment review process. The District IPM reviews the proposed projects for conceptual alignment and submits project information to HQ Office Corridor & System Planning. The District IPM will work directly with the Partners and Caltrans HQ to address alignment concerns, prepare recommendations and share with Partners, and prepare the Project Alignment Memo for HQ review and concurrence, and ultimately the District Director signature.
- **Caltrans HQ:** The PID Nomination Program Manager in the Office of Corridor & System Planning is the HQ point of contact throughout the alignment review process by working closely with District IPM to facilitate alignment discussion, explore recommendations, and ultimately ensure the alignment approach agreed by all parties are incorporated in the PID.



## 3.2 – DISTRICT COORDINATION

Prior to initiating the alignment review process, Caltrans district system planners should collaborate with Partners early and often regarding corridor needs. The Comprehensive multimodal corridor planning should include a range of multimodal improvements and other strategies that support CTP 2050 goals and CAPTI principles. The project should also be included in a Regional Transportation Plan prior to initiating a PID.

Partner may also consider pursuing the Sustainable Transportation Planning Grants to explore project proposals and reference those documents when applying for a cooperative agreement. Supporting documents can include:

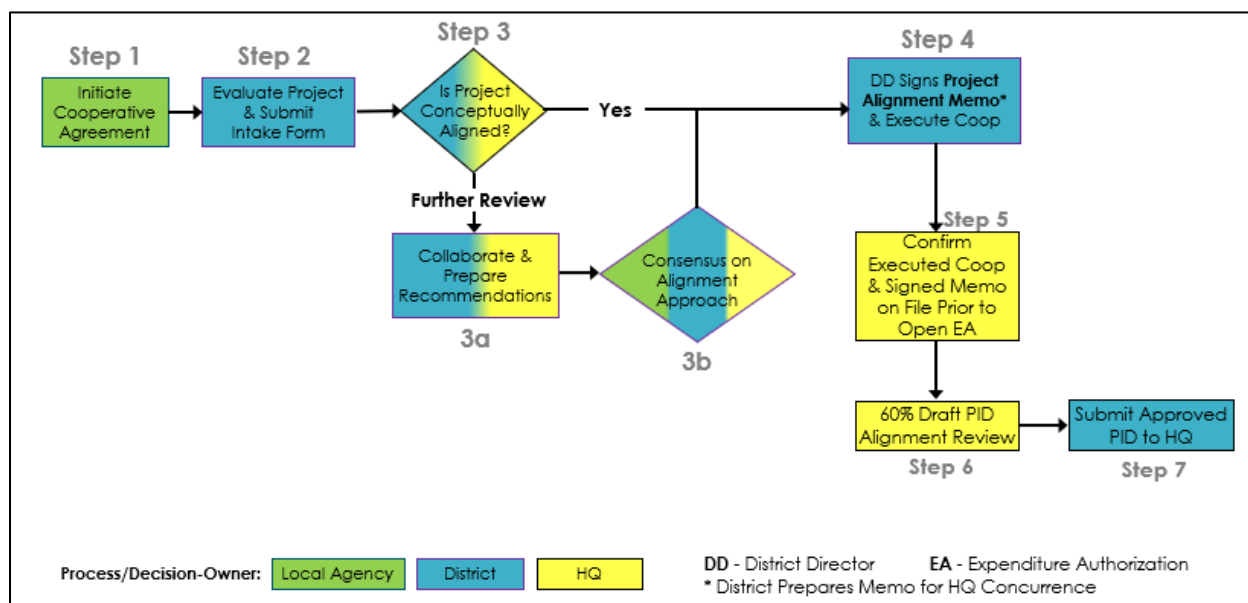
- Comprehensive Multimodal Corridor Plan, or equivalent Planning Document
- District Caltrans Active Transportation Plans
- Caltrans District Adaptation Priority Reports
- Other local and regional plans

## 3.3 PROJECT ALIGNMENT REVIEW PROCESS

The District IPM (or designee) leads the evaluation of the project proposal and may consult with other District functions and HQ as needed. Appendix A provides a list of project types, or elements of the project, that are conceptually aligned with CAPTI or those that may need further review. Projects under review should consider other factors, including but not limited to, local and regional context, the overall network, and potential harm or benefits to disadvantaged communities. Conceptual alignment may be determined for the project as a whole, or may segregate specific project elements for further review, as appropriate. A project, or elements of the project, requiring further review will undergo additional steps to explore opportunities to improve alignment.

The alignment review process starts when a Partner notifies Caltrans of their intent to enter into a cooperative agreement to initiate a PID for a project they are sponsoring on the SHS. Caltrans district reviews the proposed project and determines if the project conceptually aligns with state goals and priorities. District coordinates with Caltrans HQ and Partner throughout the process to ensure greater alignment during PID development. Figure 1, Locally Sponsored PID Review Process Flow Chart, illustrates the various steps in the review process.

FIGURE 1 – LOCALLY SPONSORED PID REVIEW PROCESS FLOW CHART



The roles and actions of each step in Figure 1 are described below.

1. **Initiate Cooperative Agreement (Partner):** Partner notifies a Caltrans [District IPM](#) of their intent to initiate a project on the SHS and enter into a cooperative agreement with Caltrans for development of a locally sponsored PID. Partner provides the District on local and regional context on the project proposal, and any supporting planning documents to the district for review.
2. **Evaluate Project & Submit Intake Form (District):** Caltrans District IPM leads the review of the project purpose and need and preliminary scope to determine conceptual alignment. The District IPM may consult with other District Planning programs and functions in this review process. Refer to Appendix A - Project Conceptual Alignment for a list of project elements. The District will then submit the Locally Sponsored PID Project Intake Form (Appendix B) for HQ review. Additional information may be requested to properly assess CAPTI alignment and explore potential recommendations to be considered during PID development. District IPM will initially categorized the proposed project as one of the following:

Conceptually Aligned

Need Further Review

If the overall project proposal is determined to be “conceptually aligned,” it will proceed to Step 3 for concurrence by HQ PID Nomination Program Manager. A project proposal, or any elements of the project, that is determined to not be conceptually aligned will “need further review.” The district will document conceptual alignment determination and provide any alignment recommendations to HQ PID Nomination Program Manager.

3. **District & HQ Coordination:** Once HQ receives the Intake Form and all relevant information, HQ PID Nomination Program Manager coordinate with the District and consult with Caltrans subject matter experts<sup>2</sup>, as appropriate, and evaluate the information and recommendations provided in the Intake Form. Projects that are conceptually aligned with CAPTI will receive confirmation from HQ to proceed to Step 4, where the District IPM drafts the Project Alignment Memo (Appendix C) for District Director signature.

Projects that “need further review” will proceed to Step 3a.

### **3a. Collaborate & Prepare Recommendations (HQ & District):**

HQ PID Nomination Program Manager will coordinate with District IPM to discuss any alignment concerns and explore recommendations for consideration in PID development to improve alignment.

If upon further review it was determined the overall project is CAPTI aligned, the project can skip step 3b and proceed to Step 4. The District IPM would document other factors that support alignment without any recommendations in the Project Alignment Memo.

### **3b. Consensus on Alignment Approach:**

The District IPM will share the recommendations with the Partner and how the recommendations will improve the project alignment with state goals and priorities when incorporated in the PID. This step may involve HQ and other partners, as necessary, to reach consensus recommendations and alignment approach. The consensus may be an agreement to consider certain recommendations in PID development and not others, or agreement to defer certain recommendations for future consideration as the project develops. It is important that in this step, all parties involved

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<sup>2</sup> Subject Matter Experts include, but not limited to, Caltrans HQ/District Division of Transportation Planning, Caltrans HQ/District Office of Sustainability, Caltrans HQ/District Office of Traffic Operations, Caltrans HQ/District Office of Traffic Safety, Caltrans HQ/District Division of Environmental, etc.



can accept and support the overall alignment approach, and the justifications are well documented in the Project Alignment Memo.

This step may also be elevated to Caltrans and Partner executive management, as appropriate, to further discuss the recommendations, resolve alignment concerns, and agree on the alignment approach. Executive management includes, but not limited to, Deputy District Director of Planning, District Single Focal Point, HQ Division of Transportation Planning Division Chief, and Partner executive team.

Once all parties agree on the alignment approach, the project proceeds to Step 4.

4. **Project Alignment Memo (HQ & District):** The District IPM prepares a draft *Project Alignment Memo* (Appendix C) for review and concurrence by HQ PID Nomination Program Manager.

The Memo describes the project's general scope, proposed project or elements that are conceptually aligned with CAPTI, and elements that may not be conceptually aligned. The Memo also outlines recommendations to improve alignment, as well as any agreement and alignment approach that were reached.

Once HQ reviews and concurs with the memo, the District finalizes the Memo for signature by the District Director.

5. **Open Phase for Charging (District & HQ):** The District will submit a copy of the Project Alignment Memo and executed Cooperative Agreement to the HQ Office of Project Planning, who will then process the request to open the project for PID phase charging.
6. **60% Draft PID Alignment Review (HQ):** HQ PID Nomination Program Manager reviews all locally sponsored PIDs at 60% completion (draft PID) to ensure the scope is consistent with the Project Alignment Memo. Caltrans acknowledges there may be further scope refinements as the PID is finalized. While there are various reasons for scope refinements, it is important that Caltrans and Partner are communicating throughout PID development to ensure a transparent process and avoid surprises later.
7. **Submit Approved PID to HQ (District):** Once the PID is approved, the District sends a copy to the HQ PID Nomination Program Manager and the Office of Project Planning.

## 4 – Alignment Implementation

As the project begins the PA&ED phase, the Project Development Team must ensure the alignment approach outlined in the Project Alignment Memo are implemented in the project. Projects that do not address relevant policy alignment during the project development process may be at risk of being considered by Caltrans for future state & federal discretionary funding, as well as receiving Caltrans partnership or a letter of support for discretionary funding programs. Conversely, projects that are CAPTI aligned are not guaranteed future Caltrans funding considerations since those considerations are subject to the CSIS project nomination process, in which projects are evaluated and prioritized along with other project nominations based on CSIS investment framework.

# Appendices

## APPENDIX A – PROJECT CONCEPTUAL ALIGNMENT

Project Proposals (Not all-inclusive)	Alignment Category
<b>CATEGORY 1</b>	
<p><b>Transit/Rail Facilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transit only lanes that prohibit passenger vehicles, bus-on-shoulder</li> <li>• Traffic signal priority for new or improved transit service</li> <li>• New rail capacity</li> <li>• New mobility hubs, transit stations, and rail stations</li> </ul> <p><b>Bike Facilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protected bikeway or bike facility</li> <li>• Secure bicycle parking</li> </ul> <p><b>Pedestrian Facilities and Crossings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sidewalks, median islands, pedestrian hybrid beacons, pedestrian bridges</li> </ul> <p><b>Freight/Goods Movement Facilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Truck-only lanes that prohibit passenger vehicles</li> <li>• Zero emission vehicle goods movement</li> </ul> <p><b>Passenger Vehicle Facilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated corridor management, Incident management enhancements</li> <li>• Adaptive ramp metering</li> <li>• Roundabouts</li> <li>• Auxiliary lanes (less than one mile), passing lane (less than 2 miles)</li> <li>• Managed lanes conversions</li> </ul> <p><b>Others:</b> Shoulder widening for safety-only purposes, broadband, ZEV charging stations, hydrogen fueling stations</p> <p><i>All improvements must be consistent with Caltrans Guidance &amp; Policies.</i></p>	Conceptually Aligned
<b>CATEGORY 2</b>	
<p><b>Freight/Goods Movement Facilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Truck-only lanes or truck climbing lanes that does not prohibit passenger vehicles or provide physical separation</li> </ul> <p><b>Passenger Vehicle Facilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passing lanes longer than 2 miles for every 7 miles</li> <li>• Widen shoulder for the purpose of future lane additions</li> <li>• Managed lanes additions, including priced, HOV, etc.</li> <li>• Traffic control devices that may result in lane addition or restrictions on active transportation modes</li> <li>• Adding lanes to arterials</li> <li>• Auxiliary lanes greater than one mile or continuous*</li> <li>• New interchange or modifications</li> <li>• General purpose lane additions</li> </ul> <p><i>*Continuous - extension of an existing auxiliary lane to equal more than one mile in length.</i></p>	Need Further Review

**Note:** The project proposals are not in any priority or alignment order.

## APPENDIX B – LOCALLY SPONSORED PID PROJECT INTAKE FORM

[Smartsheet Intake Form](#)

### Local Sponsored PID Evaluation Guidance Intake Form

Please provide information regarding the purposed local sponsored PID scope.

Project Information	
District	<input type="text"/>
EA (if Available)	<input type="text"/>
Project ID (if available)	<input type="text"/>
County	<input type="text"/>
Route	<input type="text"/>
Begin Post Mile	<input type="text"/>
End Post Mile	<input type="text"/>
Project Name	<input type="text"/>
Project Location (Brief Description)	<input type="text"/>
Project Work Description	

Provide detailed scope elements and features, if available, including approximate lengths and quantities.

Project Preliminary Purpose & Need (if available)

## District Alignment Recommendation

After the project scope has been reviewed, please select the District recommendation regarding CAPTI alignment. Please refer to Appendix A - Project Conceptual Alignment Table of the Locally Sponsored PID Evaluation Guidance

Select or enter value

Please select one or more of the 10 CAPTI Guiding Principles the project is potentially aligned with.

Select or enter value

Provide a brief justification for the District recommendation. You may reference the project proposal from the Project Conceptual Alignment Table and context consideration, such as geographic, socio-economic, completion of a corridor, etc.

Is this project in a currently approved Regional Transportation Plan?

Select

## Local Agency Contact

Local Agency

Local Agency Contact Name (First, Last)

Local Agency Phone Number

Local Agency Email



## District Contact

District Investment Planning Manager or Designee

District Contact Email

District Contact Phone Number

Form Date Field

File Upload

Drag and drop files here or [browse files](#)

☐ Send me a copy of my responses

## APPENDIX C – PROJECT ALIGNMENT MEMO TEMPLATE

### **Memorandum**

**To:** Partner Agency Name  
Organization

**Date:** Month date, year

**File:** Optional—delete

**From:** NAME (ALL CAPS)  
Title  
Division/District

**Subject:** **PROJECT ALIGNMENT FOR [PROJECT TITLE]**

The Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has reviewed the [Project Title] (Project) proposed by [Partner Agency Name] (Partner) and concurs with the development of the Project Initiation Document as identified in the attached cooperative agreement.

#### **Suggested Languages (select one or combination)**

[The Project, as presented, is determined to be conceptually aligned with the Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI) and other Caltrans policies.]

[Caltrans and Partner agreed to consider the following recommendations during PID development to address alignment concerns.]

[The following scope elements may not be in alignment with CAPTI and will be further explored and addressed as the project develops.]

Please ensure the Project continues to address CAPTI alignment in the project scoping and development process. If the Project does not address relevant policy alignment moving forward, the Project may be at risk of being considered for state & federal discretionary funding, as well as receiving Caltrans partnership or a letter of support for future state and federal funding program.

This memo does not guarantee funding or approval of future phases of the project. Caltrans consideration of the Project for future state and federal discretionary funding opportunities, letter of support, or partnership for federal grant programs is subject to the Caltrans System Investment Strategy (CSIS) nomination process, in which the Project will be evaluated and prioritized along with other project nominations based on CSIS investment framework.

We look forward to our continued collaboration on the Project and improving its alignment with CAPTI as the project develops.

*APPROVAL RECOMMENDED*

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NAME  
District Director

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Date

*APPROVED Signatures vary by subject and delegation.*

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NAME  
Title

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Date

Attachments